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1981/06/03

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BRIEFING MEMORANDUM
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TO: The Secretary
FROM: EA - John H. Holdridge *10/16*
SUBJECT: Your Meeting with Chinese Defense Minister Geng Biao

I. SUMMARY

Your meeting with Vice Premier/Defense Minister Geng Biao will provide an opportunity for detailed discussions of global and regional security issues and US-China security cooperation. You will want to describe plans to strengthen our global force structure as well as recent improvements in our military posture in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. You will also want to outline our intention to further relax export controls on dual-use technology and munitions list sales to China.

II. SETTING

As the guest, you should make the first presentation. The Chinese will be looking for confirmation of our resolve to act effectively to oppose the armed spread of Soviet influence. Geng will stress the importance of China's defense modernization program, including the acquisition of carefully selected foreign military technology, to meeting the Soviet threat. Last year Geng led a delegation to the US that discussed this with Defense Secretary Brown. In noting the value we attach to our relations with China, you will want to assure him that we consider a strong China an indispensable bulwark against Soviet and Soviet-proxy expansionism and that we are prepared to implement policies to advance our security cooperation.

III. ISSUES

1. Your main purpose is to impress upon the Chinese that we are resolved to strengthen US military capabilities and intensify consultations with allies and friends in order to deny the Soviets opportunities for further strategic gains.

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2. You will want to describe actions by the Administration to build up US defense forces, including defense budget increases and giving substance to the RDF, and to support our friends, such as Pakistan. In this context, you should outline recent improvements in US military posture and deployments in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. You might also brief Geng on the status of our consultations with NATO, Japan, Thailand, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand on joint actions to bolster our military posture in Europe and East Asia.

3. Underlining the value of US/China consultations on security issues, you should solicit details of China's military assistance to the Khmer and Afghan resistance movements. You should also note that while we share an interest in reducing the dependence of third countries on the Soviet Union as a source of military equipment, we must ensure that our military exports are not diverted to objectionable destinations, such as Libya.

4. You should also point out that Chinese exports of sensitive nuclear materials without adequate safeguards could damage our shared strategic interests.

5. In conveying our plans to further relax export controls on dual-use technology and munitions list sales to China, you should stress that we intend henceforth to move forward in treating China as a friendly non-allied country. Arms sales will be sensitive because of allied and domestic concerns. We wish to have further discussions with the Chinese about their specific needs before we consult in detail with our allies and the Congress.

Drafted: EA/C:JJBuczacki:jjb
5/27/81 X21004

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